through many editions and which has regained its youth by complete revision has many advantages. There must be few words, except those pertaining to the most specialised branches of medicine, which are not included with their derivation and meaning in well-tried terms. The illustrations, both the text figures and the plates on the art insets, have also attained a clarity and usefulness not usually expected in a dictionary. In fact for the British reader the only fault to be found with this work is the American spelling. It is a fine example of American scholarship and book production and nobody buying a dictionary should do so without very carefully considering it. J. E. M.

HUMAN GENETICS. Edited by Alan Carruth Stevenson, being No. 3 of Volume 17 of *British Medical Bulletin*. (Pp. 177-264. 20s.) London: Medical Department British Council, 1961.

THIS review is very relevant and will well serve as an introduction to the flood of new concepts released by recent advances in cytogenetics and in biochemical genetics. Ford reviews these advances in human cytogenetics and concludes that a gross chromosomal abnormality affects one in three hundred live-born children. Penrose reviews Mongolism, Davidson describes the inherited variations in leucocytes, Lennox discusses the X-chromosomes, Polani writes on Turner's syndrome, and the cytogenetics of abnormal sex development is clarified by Harden and Jacobs.

In biochemical genetics Holzel contributes a useful review of galactosæmia. Harris and Woolf both write rather condensed accounts of the inheritance of plasma proteins and aminoaciduria. Other papers study pseudo-cholinesterase, the new science of pharmacogenetics (the study of genetically determined variations in animal species as revealed by the effect of drugs), multifactorial inheritance and the genetics of finger-print patterns. The paper by Carter on the genetics of congenital pyloric stenosis details his two generation survey with its emphasis on a pre-disposing genotype with two components, first a common dominant gene, and second a sex-modified multifactorial background. A most interesting paper by Stevenson attempts to assess the frequency of congenital and hereditary disease.

Everyone requires to have some knowledge of recent advances in this field and, though many of these papers are not easy reading, they are almost all rewarding. J. E. M.

THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF MEDICINE. Annual Reviews, 1961. (Pp. xii + 342; illustrated. 40s.) London: Athlone Press, 1961.

THIS is the continuation of the series previously published as "Lectures on the Scientific Basis of Medicine." This series gained wide acceptance and this presentation represents little but a change in title.

The reviews are lectures given between October, 1959, and March, 1960, and are of scientific rather than limited medical interest. They represent real advances or consolidation in the fields discussed, and are definitely not "year book" digests. A wide range is covered, including genetic analysis via somatic cells, interferon, epidemiology in leukæmia, blood enzymes in diagnosis, liver failure and magnesium metabolism, and the lecturers are established authorities on their subject.

A useful feature is the inclusion of a consolidated index to the previous lecture series. Many of the lectures are of permanent interest and deserve the excellent printing and production afforded by the publishers. J. E. M.